

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEST AND EGGS OF THE CALIFORNIA
BLACK-CAPPED GNAT-CATCHER. (POLIOPTILA CALIFORNICA
BREWSTER.)

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This gnat-catcher was first described by Mr. William Brewster, from specimens collected by Mr. F. Stephens near Riverside, San Bernardino County, Cal., March 28, 1878.

A nest and four eggs of this species have recently been obtained from Mr. Stephens, to whom the credit belongs for the discovery of the first specimens. These were taken near the town of San Bernardino, Cal., on May 2, 1887, and are now in the National Museum collection (Catalogue No. 23294).

The nest of *P. Californica*, like that of *P. plumbea* BAIRD, from Arizona Territory, differs radically in structure from that of its eastern relative, *P. cerulea* (LINN.), which is too well known to ornithologists to require description. It lacks entirely the artistic finish of the lichen-covered structure of the former, and resembles more in shape certain forms of the nest of the Summer Yellow Warbler, *Dendroica aestiva* (GML.), and the American Redstart, *Setophaga ruticilla* (LINN.).

The nest is cone-shaped, built in the forks of a small shrub, a species of mahogany, *Coleogyne ramosissima* (TORR.) I think, only 2 feet from the ground, and it is securely fastened to several of the twigs among which it is placed. Its walls are about half an inch in thickness. The material of which the nest is composed, is well quilted together and makes a compact and solid structure. Externally the nest is composed principally of hemp-like vegetable fiber mixed with small curled-up leaves of the white sage, *Eurotia lanata*, plant-down, and fragments of spiders' webs. Inside the nest is lined with the same hemp-like fiber, only much finer, and a few feathers. The cavity of the nest is cup-shaped and rather deep. Externally the nest measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in depth. The inner diameter is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in depth. Compared with a nest of *Polioptila plumbea* BAIRD, now before me, from Arizona Territory, it seems much better constructed and also somewhat larger.

I took three nests of the latter species near Tucson, Ariz., during the months of May and June, 1872. Two of these were placed in bunches of mistletoe, probably *Phor edendron flavescens*, growing on mesquite trees from 12 to 20 feet from the ground; and one of them is described in the "History of North American Birds," by Baird, Brewer, and Ridgway, Volume III, page 502. The third nest was placed in a crotch of a cholla cactus.

The ground color of the eggs of *Poliotila californica* BREWSTER is bright light-green, much more pronounced than in the eggs of either *P. caerulea* and *P. plumbea*, now before me. They are covered with minute spots of a brownish-red color distributed irregularly over the entire surface of the egg, but nowhere so thick as to hide the ground-color. These eggs measure .50 by .45, .58 by .45, .57 by .45, and .57 by .44 inch.

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